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Light on
Dark Days



LIGHT ON DARK DAYS.

Collect for Ash Wednesday.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent, create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

LIGHT ON DARK DAYS:

OR

Meditations for Lent.

BY

SOPHIA MAY ECKLEY,

Authoress of "The Oldest of the Old World."

"And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of my hand."—ISAIAH li. 16.

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TO
MY SISTER, F. A. E.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
In the Valley	1
Chastened	13
Dying to the World	17
The Faithfulness and Tenderness of God ...	23.
Precious Seed	33
Faith	37
Prayer	45
Praise	49
Forgiveness	53
Patience	59
The Angel Guardian	65
Heavenly Mindedness	71
The Lilies	77
The Continuing City	85
Planted in His Likeness	97

Preface.

T is the object of this little book to furnish the Christian Pilgrim with such promises from Scripture as shall prove "Light on Dark Days" of sorrow or bereavement.

And even should these pages fall into the hands of those who have yet their dark days to know, still they need not be altogether profitless to *them*, at this solemn interval of Lent, which our beloved Church has set apart as a peculiar season for meditation and earnest devotion.

S. M. E.

8, *Springfield Place*,

Bath, 1863.

HYMN OF ST. ZAVIER.

O Deus! ego amo Te,
Nec amo Te, ut salves me,
Aut quia non amantes Te
Aeterno punis igne.
Tu, Tu, mi Jesu! totum me
Amplexus es in cruce
Tulisti clavus, lanceam
Multamque ignominiam
Innumeros Dolores,
Sudores et angores,
Ac mortem—et haec propter me
Cur igitur non amem Te
O Jesu, amantissime.
Non ut in cœlo salves me,
Aut me aeternum damnes me
Nec praemii ullius spe
Sed sicut Tu amaste me
Sic amo et amabo Te
Solum quia Rex meus es
Et solum quia Deus es.

PARAPHRASE.

O God! I love Thee,
Not only that Thou savest me
Nor that because those loving Thee
From endless woe shall rescued be.
Thou, Thou my Jesu! all for me
Did'st bear the Cross on Calvary,
Wert torn by nails, wert pierced by spear,
Numberless griefs my sins to bear.
The bloody sweat and agony,
Anguish and death;—and these for me,
Then wherefore may I not love Thee?
O Jesu, who hast thus loved me!
Not to be safe in heaven with Thee,
Nor from dark hell to rescued be,
Not for the hope of some reward,
But simply that Thou lov'st me, Lord.
Thus do I love, and will love Thee,
Only because my King Thou art,
And only *God* can fill my heart.

S. M. E.

In the Valley.

"For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer."

ISAIAH liv. 7, 8.

THROUGH THE TUNNEL.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

How black is the darkness,
How sullen the gloom ;
The train's solemn thunder,
Through the tunnel's drear tomb ;
The eye cannot pierce it,
Though the eye is awake ;
Vain are the efforts
The death-gloom to break.

Fierce sparks and cinders
Shiver the gloom ;
Tho' this be but transient
In the tunnel's black tomb.
'Tis the valley of shadows,
The shadow of death ;
Tho' awake we pass through it,
Living,—in breath.

Not so in that valley
The Psalmist passed through,
With the rod, and the staff,
His comfort anew.
Not so when the heart
Is hushed 'neath the sod,
And calm the soul sleeps
In the bosom of God.

But awake we speed thro' it,
This valley of death ;
The spirit still fettered
In its prison of breath.
How black is the darkness !
How solemn the gloom !
The train's solemn thunder,
Through the tunnel's drear tomb.

In the Valley.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."



MOST of us can recall some period of their life's history when they found themselves in "the valley of shadows." Perhaps, as is often the case, their course was marked by a river, and beside the green shadows of the stream they wandered on, longing to breathe the purer air of the hills. It was the "valley of the *shadow* of death," not death itself. Not only may disease be called a shadow of death, but trouble, trial, and afflictions, may place us for a time in a dark valley, which proves to us one of the "*shadows* of death," the fore-runner of the close of life's journey, the

welcomed friend who shall prepare us for the resplendent light of God's city, by veiling our eyes to the mockery of sin and transient light we have groped in here.

Such is the hopefulness of human nature, that, without we are actually hidden in this valley of shadows, we seldom realize it. When death's shadow mantles our foot-path, we are thoughtful then. When sorrow weaves her mantle of shadows and flings it over the windows of the soul, it is only that we may the more earnestly leave the dark valley and climb the mountains of faith. The way may be steep, the path narrow, like the shelving Alpine pass ; but, after we have traversed the dark forest of pines, that march like armies up the height, when our feet have prest the last shadows in the forest, we hear the cascades that throw their silver nets over the grey rocks and catch in their wind-woven meshes the rosy light from the glacier-waves, that remind us of the "sea of glass" that St. John saw.

But are we yet at the summit? Are we beyond the shadows yet? Cathedral shaped rocks cut the horizon and pierce the translucent blue with dome, pinnacle and frieze.

A little more, and we find, as we mount higher and higher, we pause to rest on our alpenstock and wait for breath. The air is so pure, we find respiration difficult. Alas! it is the valley air that we are most accustomed to breathe, the lower atmosphere of the world-valley of shadows. Our eyes are too accustomed to the soft green light that has come through the valley-mist; we can scarcely bear the splendor, the majesty of that burst of sunlight which falls on the icy shield of the mountain monarch above, and shivers her arrows of light across our path. Over the great glacier sea we must walk on; we are out of the shadows now; far as eye can reach we see wave upon wave of ice, transfixed as it were in death's repose. Our feet totter as we cross each crevasse, each frail ridge of ice which sustains our feet now, and in a few short hours is melted and

gone. We are out of the shadows now ; more accustomed to the light, we tear the veil from our eyes that we may see the solemn Alpine church which we have reached.

We can look without pain at the aisles of driven snow, the nave, the choir. We can hear the deep diapason of the avalanche, and the "Amen" of the ceaseless rills around us. Do we mean now to go back to the valley of shadows? idling away our time in the vapid pleasures of sunless nature? Are we content to remember the flowers? Beautiful though they were, yet before our wreaths were woven, Death inscribed his name on the petals of each; and we found too late we had grasped but shadows, the *spirits* of flowers. Are we never weary of painting in memory the clouds that fantastically wove their images from the great forge of the Sun, that we watched but a few hours ago in the valley of shadows?

THE ALPS CATHEDRAL.

THE village church, its joyful bells
Are ringing music chimes,
Filling the air with floating verse ;
Like a Poet with his rhymes.

'Tis Sunday, and the Villagers
Their weekly toil lay by,
To meet the day of holy rest
In bright festivity.

Yes! 'tis Sabbath in the valley,
'Tis Sabbath on the height ;
How solemn, deep, mysterious,
Is that Sabbath infinite.

There no rude jar, no earthly voice,
Rends the translucent air ;
But surpliced rocks of glittering snows
Are Priests who worship there.

Then go to this grand church with me,
Not in the vale below ;
But upwards on those icy peaks
Where angels come and go.

A vast Cathedral ! sunlit walls,
Of amethystine glow,
Of emerald green, of ruby blush,
With polished floor of snow.

See the long aisles, the glittering nave,
The choir of glacier blue,
Hear the "Amen" from ceaseless rills,
In solemn cadence flow.

And the deep diapason of
The thundering torrent's swell;
The organ of these awful heights,
The Avalanche's peal.

Then mark the niches where enshrined
Are statues cut in snow,
No! no! they are angels! look again,
See how they come and go!

And hear the voices from the pines
Far, far they chant below,
Marching like armies up the steep,
But pause at steps of snow.

But who of earth may enter here?
What voices join to share
In the devotion of this church,
This Alpine church of prayer!

'Tis a cathedral at whose door
But *they* should enter in,
Who've washed their robes from valley-stains,
Earth's valley-stains of sin!

O! Spirits of departed life!
Are ye not here with me?
A lonely child of earth who'd mount
These heights to God with ye!

There is another strikingly significant symbol of the valley of the shadow of death ; though more utilitarian perhaps in character, still it is a very suggestive one. When the traveller starts upon his journey, buoyant with hope and flushed with excitement, in the train, speeding along through villages, over plains, along tedious wastes ; suddenly the steam-driven train plunges into the blackness of the long tunnel, out of the day-light in a moment, plunged into blackest night. The voices that interchanged a moment before are hushed, conversation flags and ceases, the paper and the novel are discarded ; the parent clasps his child tighter, and a feeling of solemnity hushes the levity of a moment before. The deep hum of the train as it rushes through the darkness is the only sound we hear ; the cinders and sparks, the fiery breath of the iron monster is all we see ; and we feel really as if we were in the "valley of the shadow of awful death." It is a terrible valley ; no eye can pierce the blackness to

see the "staff," if it is even there. This valley of the shadow of death solemnizes our thoughts, subdues our spirits; and we think now more seriously of the uncertainty of life, and more honestly of ourselves than we did a minute before, when we were in perhaps as much danger except that we had light. Now light is withheld, our eyes are not sealed to the light, but the shadow of darkness is over us, and though our eyes are opened we can discern nothing. Just so we go through life's valley. Our eyes are open but we cannot see, yet we have no excuse that we are blind.

Thus the shadows of evil darken and blind our spiritual eyes, and we walk with bandages cut out of the "shadows" that evil throws about our path. We clothe ourselves in shadows, we grasp at shadows, we trifle with shadows, we fall in love with shadows, we are absorbed in the interests of time's shadows, and are ourselves but "vain shadows;" as we walk we leave our footprints in shadows. Our words are shadows,

and few of us leave their lamps of truth and example to lighten the shadows, or guide those who shall come after us. But, let us come out of this valley of sin, out from the shadows, and climb the Alp-land which is given to our world to furnish us a typical *shadow* of that holy mountain of God. Every journey made over these Alp-passes should prepare us for the spiritual journey to the spiritual Alp-land.

Grand cathedral! upon whose threshold we need not wait for an invitation. There is no crowd too dense that one more cannot be admitted there.

THE "TE DEUM" OF THE ALPS.

"The Lord is in His Holy temple, let all the earth keep silence."

SUBLIME cathedral! God's alpine church!
Tower, pinnacle, and dome,
With vaulted roof of azure blue,
Frescoed with cloud-lit plume.

Grand harmonies from unseen choirs,
Sublime response below,
The great "Te Deum" from those heights,
Those galleries of snow.

An altar too of fretted rock,
Draped with the silvery snow;
And candlesticks of golden light,
Illumed at sunset's glow.

And mark the wave of glacier blue!
And aisle of dark moraine,
The snowy whiteness shrouded o'er
Where footsteps wear a stain.

With scathed pine by lightening riven,
With tottering boulder on the cliff,
With glacier, wave, and avalanche,
With rill and torrent's strife,

We join to swell the anthem great,
The grand "Te Deum" sing,
We praise, we praise Thee, O! our God,
Our Bishop, Priest, and King!

Chastened.

"As chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."—2 COR. vi. 9, 10.

WAIT PATIENTLY FOR HIM.

From false to true, from grief to joy,
From inertness into life;
From bitterness into sweetness,
In peace from out the strife.

Why look behind, when straight thy path
Is onward with the sun?
Not in cold vapours of the past,
False moonlight that is gone.

Oh! who would back in shadows grope,
When the sun of God shines bright?
Oh! faithless ye, who shadows chase
In retrospection's night.

For Love, her amaranthine wreath
Will twine around thy brow,
And thou the tender weight shall feel
Heaven's flowers that bud and grow.

Nor droop, nor fade, nor waste their breath,
On earth's low tainted air
Of sin, and pain, and thankless toil,
Of discontent and care.

For 't were better to be wronged than wrong,
To pity than to hate,
To meekly stoop and kiss the rod,
Then in God's patience, wait.

Chastened.

"Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and
teachest him out of Thy law."

IT is always a painful index of our fallen humanity that we are so prone to think God has forsaken us, and hidden his face from us when we are in trouble. Instead of that, He hides us in His pavilion, beneath the wings of His redeeming love. He is so near, we cannot see Him. He does not hide from us, it is we only who hide from Him. If (I speak reverently) we do not make ourselves familiar with God, when He is compassing us about with mercies, blessings, joys, and happiness undeserved, in vain may we hope to feel His nearness when the waves of trouble break over us. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest

and teachest him." Are we taught by these storms of suffering? Do we find sweet comfort from Him? Are we in His "pavilion?" Does nearness to Him wean us from the unsatisfying and disappointing experiences of life, and do we prefer His *pavilion* to all earthly palaces, honors, or gain? If so, who shall take away that peace which passes all understanding? It is the right use of sorrow that sanctifies the soul, purifies the heart, refines and elevates the character. Everything in Nature is submitted to the same law. The seed must be crushed to fructify. The transient death of Winter is the harbinger of Spring; the *chastening* brings forth the fruit. So does the body die, returns to *dust*; thus chastened to put on Immortality. And the Spirit also must be chastened to bring forth the fruits of perfected holiness. Let us then bless God that He distinguishes us by chastening us, for then are we sons and daughters, "for whom He loveth He chasteneth, even as a father his own children."

Dying to the World.

“For to be carnally minded is *death*; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”—ROMANS viii. 6.

"In the midst of life we are in death ; of whom then may
we seek succour, but of thee, O God?"

In the midst of life we are in death,
Of whom then may we seek
For succour, but of Thee, O Lord,
To whom else can we speak ?

When life seems fair as summer's morn,
When health and joy are ours,
O let us then remember, Lord,
Will come life's darker hours.

For in the warmth of day, we see
The flowers are fresh and fair ;
But mark ! how frail, and oh, how sure,
Will fall the cold death-sere.

Nor summer's sun, nor evening dew,
Nor human hand can stay
The frosty wind of death and blight,
That steals their life away.

For in the midst of life, how sure
Will fall death's icy hand,
Upon some flower of life we prize ;
Unclass some loving hand,

We thought we held so fast in ours
That nothing could divide ;
Until death's servant came, and took
An angel from our side.

There is no death since Jesu died,
That word is known no more ;
'Tis only Life the angels sing,
Of life for evermore.

Dying to the World.

"I die daily."



HAT is this death of which the Apostle speaks?

Is it not dying daily to the perishing, the vain, the false, the evil of this life? Is it not using this world as not abusing it, fully realizing that the fashion of it is passing away? What is then dying to the world? It is growing cold, inanimate to all that we cannot bear away with us through the grave-rest into eternity. Every one of us is fully conscious in what of earth his *life* consists; whether pleasure, fame, or any of the countless bubbles that float on the surface of the river of time.

Do we die to those entanglements that must perish in their using? Does Love

make our life? Is that love, though human, made immortal through Him who first loved us? Do we make these earthly loves of ours part and parcel of our love to our Lord and Saviour? If it has been our lot to feel the blessing of a pure and holy love, do we acknowledge the gift, and hold it only through and in Him? Then we can carry that boon with us through the dark door of the grave. 'To this we need not die daily; for love is life, and is given to us for our soul's *life*.

We walk two paths every one of us. One path is visible; we tread upon it, and leave our foot-prints behind us; the way is often steep, rough, and frozen; sometimes through nettles, stones, briars, and sometimes flowers. This is the path we *see*, everybody sees. Most of the world take well heed how they appear as they walk this path; they observe that their garments are cut in the approved style, and their feet handsomely and comfortably shod. But little do this class realize that they are at the

same moment walking a spiritual, invisible path, that is only visible to God. Little do this class realize, their walk is observed, and the style of their garments and the strength of their sandals is known to Him. On that spiritual and unseen path our souls may be wandering, groping amid the dark sunless copses of eternal death, while the outside world passes and jostles us in our fashionable attire, thinking well of us; dreaming as little as we ourselves of our real walk.

To die daily to the perishable, and to live to that which is imperishable and eternal, is what we should strive for. What matters it, the cut of our earthly garments, so that the spiritual robes of the soul are not scant, and short, and ill-fitting? Verily it is strange that we think so much more of the style, and elegance of those garments that the moth inherits, than of those robes that we must wear when we have passed through the anti-chamber of the grave. Strange that only the path we *see* absorbs

22 DYING TO THE WORLD.

us, while our souls are travelling on, on ; not stationary at any *caravansera* on the road, but either marching to the land of life and love and blessedness—or—to the way that leads to everlasting death.

The Faithfulness and Tenderness of God.

“For we have not an high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”—ROMANS iv. 15.

" I hide myself in Thy pavillion."

In thy safe pavillion, Lord,
'Neath the shadow of thy wing,
Let me nestle down my head,
All my sorrow to Thee bring.

In thy safe pavillion, Lord,
'Neath the shadow of thy wing,
Lay me like a little child;
To my Father I would cling.

Let me hear the distant waves,
Silvery chimes upon that shore,
Softly murmuring to the blest.
Rest, sweet rest, for evermore.

On thy bosom calmly sleeping,
Weary with this earthly strife,
Speak to me of love unchanging,
Everlasting Love and Life!

The Faithfulness and Tenderness of God.

"I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that
of very faithfulness thou hast caused me to be troubled."

PSALM cxix. 75.



FAITH to see, heart to feel, and conviction to be assured that God's "judgments" to us are always "right," and that it is a proof of His faithfulness that he causes us to be troubled, is a great attainment in spiritual grace, and a true incentive to patience and resignation in life. We are reminded of the touching complaint of the poor old man who had lived so long that he thought God had forgotten him, and how miserable he was in the idea, and felt that no greater disaster could befall him than to slip out of God's

26 THE FAITHFULNESS AND

memory. Not so with those who are in any affliction, for it is then they know that God is remembering them in mercy, and not visiting them in wrath.

Such is the weakness of our fallen nature, that when we are in the *valley of shadows* and trial, we are not ready to believe that we are then especially objects of His memory and *faithfulness*. Can we not withdraw into the silences of the soul's chapel, and there prostrate ourselves in spirit before the memories of Christ's own sufferings and death? "Was any sorrow like unto my sorrow?" pleaded the voice of Him "who spoke as never man spake." Can any human suffering be equal to this? Is He not now touched with the feeling of our infirmities?" Is He not our "Great Intercessor?" And at this Lenten season particularly, are we drawn to the contemplation of our Lord's lovely character, His patience, gentleness, forbearance, forgiveness, tenderness, and love. We think too little of our Saviour's *tenderness*, though

we are ever ready to see and admire His divine attributes and miracles. For instance, we find ourselves in imagination holding our breath as we picture the darkened chamber of Jairus' daughter. The maiden was dead; the house of the Jewish ruler darkened; the light and life of his heart suddenly extinguished, and, as we are told, while the Saviour was instructing the people there "came one from the ruler's house" with the cry, "Thy daughter is dead, trouble not the master;" we can almost hear that answering voice of sympathy as it broke upon the distressed and agitated mind of the father, "Fear not, believe only, and she shall be made whole." We seem to be one of that solemn group, with father and mother, "weeping and bewailing." But as the Evangelist records the scene, Christ permitted no idle or curious intruder to follow Him into the house of mourning, only Peter and James were suffered to follow their Lord. We can fancy the incredulous smile of doubt that clouded

28 THE FAITHFULNESS AND

each one of those faces worn with watching and weeping, when that calm, majestic voice, in tones of tenderest pity whispered, "Weep not, she is not dead, but sleepeth." A laugh, we are told, followed the words.—"They laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead." Without reproof he commanded them all to withdraw. The lifeless remains of the once beautiful maiden, the hope of that proud ruler's household, were sleeping in the mystery of death on a couch before him. He drew nearer, stooped, and lifted the lifeless hand from her side, and "called saying, 'Maid arise,'" and her spirit came; the flush of youth and life was restored to her, and she was brought back again to the world and the family that she had left. As we muse over this miracle, we feel how deep was the *tenderness* of the Saviour's character here. We are more attracted towards it than even to the majesty and the wonder of the miracle itself. Just so, as we follow that little family of Bethany to the grave of Lazarus. What more beau-

tiful example do we find in our Saviour's life, than the tender sympathy He evinced for Martha and Mary? It was a little household He loved. Martha came to Him, her eyes streaming and her heart full of faith, pleading in her own simple way, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." We are told "He groaned in the spirit and was troubled." "JESUS WEPT." Was it because the brother was dead, that he wept? Certainly not, because he knew He should raise him. "Behold how He loved him," exclaimed one of His disciples. Little did they appreciate their divine Master's *tenderness* of heart. They believed in His miracles, but even *they* could not understand His divine pity for sorrow. "He was troubled and groaned in His spirit," because the sisters had lost their stay and support. He remembered how kind they had been to Him, when in His journeyings, fatigued with discouragements, weary and footsore, He had plodded along over the steep hills of Bethany, and the day

30 THE FAITHFULNESS AND

that He had stopped at Mary's house, and "she had anointed Him with ointment, and had wiped His feet with her hair"—He remembered that also. The character of these two sisters was so different. Mary was so enthusiastic ; so full of faith. Martha was timid, and though she believed her Lord's words that her brother should rise again at the resurrection, yet she did not feel as Mary did, when she "arose quickly and went out to meet Him." We follow the little band to the door of the tomb. We see our Divine Lord, as we saw Him beside the couch of the Jewish maiden. We hear His voice rise upon the air, broken by the suppressed sobs of the sisters, "Lazarus come forth!" Nor is it the wonderful miracle that astonishes us here ; it is His *tenderness* and sympathy.

We know that "out of very faithfulness," God had caused these sisters to be troubled. He knew the human heart then, as He knows it now, and many are the little families of Bethany, that are dotted over this

life's desert ; many bereaved households, where Christ may be a constant Guest.

Can we spiritualize this Jewish picture ? Can we not symbolize the scene ? Does not Christ groan in spirit over the spiritually dead ? And does He not to-day "weep with those who weep," and walk with them to the dark grave of a lost brother or lost sister, who is *spiritually* dead ? Can we not in faith take our Saviour to that grave and say, " Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not *died* ?" Can we not beseech Him to bring forth from the grave, the lost and the dead ? Can we not imitate the *tenderness* of Him who " wept " at the grave of Lazarus, and pray that all those who are dead in sin, may be raised to life through Him ? And be assured that all God's judgments are right, and that of very faithfulness He has caused His children to be troubled ?

We plant the flowers over the graves of those we love, that the summer's wind may exhale their sweetness to heaven. We may

32 *THE FAITHFULNESS, &c.*

plant also, the flowers of love and *tenderness* over the grave of our troubles, “knowing, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that out of very *faithfulness* thou hast caused us to be troubled.”

Precious Seed.

"And these are they which are sown on good ground, such as hear the word and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some an hundred."—MARK iv. 20.

" For they that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

Go forth then, go forth to the labour,
The harvest will soon be here,
With its tasselled grain, and its ripened fruits,
And its golden corn in the ear,
" For they that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

What matters the dark clouds above thee,
If they return after the rain?
Go forth with faith, for the harvest
Will bring thee the golden grain,
" For they that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

For they that sow in the morning,
E'en though they sow through their tears,
Shall reap their joy in the evening,
And find sweet rest to their cares,
" For they that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

Faith, then, must open the furrows,
Hope must drop in the seed,
Love, then shall gather her harvest,
Go forth then in earnest, take heed,
" For they that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

Precious Seed.

“He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”—PSALM CXXVI. 7.



O we bear “the precious seed” even though we are weeping for the sorrows that overwhelm us? For mark the promise, “He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” “As a man *soweth*, that shall he also reap.” “Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” asked the Saviour. Let us look well to the seed that we carry, for the harvest is coming, and shall we come back from the field with empty hands, bearing no sheaves with us, no “song” in our mouths?

We all have our hours of weeping, yet through our very tears we may look forward to *singing* with our sheaves, if we bear the "precious seed" truly in our hearts; the precious promises of our Lord through the heat and burden of the day. The seed must not be buried in the sands of unsanctified sorrow; there it cannot fructify, and there can be no "sheaves;" but it must germinate, grow, and bear a precious harvest. But how? Keep the soil of the heart tender and impressible, and make even our tears, like gentle rain, a means of fertilizing what might otherwise be but "stony ground," where the thistles of unbelief too readily take root.

Let us sing as we go too, even though our voices are weak and low. He will hear, and "put a new song in our mouths," and when life's work is ended, we shall find our labour complete, and hear our Saviour say to us, "Lift up your eyes (weep no more) and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest."—John iv. 35.

Faith.

"Purifying their hearts by faith."—ACTS xv. 9.

"Of whom the world was not worthy ; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."—HEBREWS xi. 38-40.

“ His way is in the whirlwind, and the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.”

THE clouds may gather o'er my tent,
The sun be shrouded from my sight,
The cold wind blow, the night-breeze sigh,
And oft obscure my heavenly light.
Still, He is there.

The storm may darken round my head,
The rain may drench, the tempest beat,
And yet I read, these clouds are but
The “dust” of my Redeemer's feet,
And He is there.

What matters it, the angry sky,
So He is shrouded in its gloom ;
The lowering cloud, that oft distils
In love, upon my tented home,
If He is there ?

So clouds may gather o'er my tent,
The sun be shrouded from my sight,
The cold wind blow, the night-breeze sigh,
And oft obscure my heavenly light.
Still, He is there.

The clouds may hover o'er my tent,
The rain may drench, the tempest beat,
Still, I remember that the clouds
Are “dust” of my Redeemer's feet.
And He is there.

JERUSALEM, 1859.

Faith.

Le pupille se dilate dans la nuit et finit par y trouver du jour, de meme que l'ame se dilate dans le malheur, et finit par y trouver Dieu."—*Les Misérables*, VICTOR HUGO.

"Paulus was put to death by tortures, in order that he might live in eternal bliss."—*Catacombs of St. Agnèse, Rome*.



OW touching and deeply significant are the memorials of the christian martyrs, as the stranger ponders over them in the Roman catacombs. To *suffer* in order to live, seemed the prevailing motto of the early martyrs. In threading those dark, intricate windings of the catacombs, the spiritual eye seems re-opened, and the mind illumined by reading those epitaphs that sealed the tombs of victorious martyrs.

Martyrdom seems to have been the test

of the true soldiers of Christ, not only in those early ages of the Church, when the lamp of christianity was struggling through the night of paganism ; but in all ages of the world there have been Christ's noble army of self-sacrificing martyrs. Physical tortures may not always have been employed to wrench the soul to God, but worse misery, the tortures of moral suffering, the keenest of all anguish, when the heart has cried out as did the martyrs, for "rest, rest, beyond the stars." The days of the early christian martyrs were numbered ; a few brief hours of physical torture, however exquisite, and nature yielded to the struggle, and the spirit was released by death. But the martyrdom of the body cannot compare with that of the spirit, those sufferings that are imposed upon the mind undeserved.

Christian Pilgrim ! have you borne the martyr's agony "in patience possessing your soul?" Have you endured the grief, meekly, unrepiningly, and sought no revenge in return? Have you borne

the cross of your pains, disappointments, Christ-like? If so, look up through the rents of your earthly tent, for through the clouds, shines the martyr's crown. Has life been to you a bleak desert, and have the oases been scarce, and the wells few and far between? Remember the "crown," and when the earthly journey of life shall draw to an end, and the sun shall go down behind the hills of time, remember there is a "rest" that remaineth still for the christian martyr, The last wave of time shall then lift your bark of life on to that shore where thou shalt be greeted by the question, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" and the answer, "These are they which have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "Then God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Is not this a comforting promise? Strange that we, any of us, can flinch from the martyr's sufferings, when the martyr's crown is waiting for

us. As some writer has said :—"At best, life is not very long ; a few more smiles, a few more tears, some pleasure, much pain, sunshine and song, clouds and darkness, hasty greetings, abrupt farewells ; then our little play will close, and injured and injurer will pass away."

We, none of us, are called upon to suffer more than we can bear in this life. "The wind is tempered to each shorn lamb" of Christ's flock. But mark ! the early christian martyr *saw* through his cross his *crown*. He knew he could only hope to gain it by reaching through the *fire* for it. What cared he for the blazing faggot ? It lighted his way to the crown ; what cared he for the blazing shirt of pitch, or the jaws of the savage beast, so he might be sure of his crown ? Thus with the christian now.

Sublime thought, that through the sufferings of this life, the soul must be purified by "flames," chastened and humiliated. Can we not bless God for any suffering that has brought us nearer to Him ? God knows

exactly what we need ; what would be anguish to one, might not be equal suffering to another. Some of his children He visits with afflictions, bereavements ; others with loss of health ; or worldly influence. Others He touches in the deepest recesses of the heart, where no eye but His can mark the grief that corrodes like a canker into the life and energies of the soul. We each of us think that our own peculiar sorrow is the heaviest to bear, and long to change our burden with our neighbour. Be sure your own buried sorrow is the one you only could bear the best. Remember that, "as thy day, so shall thy strength be, and His strength is made perfect in thy weakness."

A few more earthly days will pass, a few more earthly suns will set, and the christian martyr will lie down in the cool grave-rest, while his spirit shall be "at peace beyond the stars ;" the crown upon his pillow, and the palm crossed upon his breast.

Happy they who can look upon such and

say, "of whom the world was not worthy," "perfected through suffering," "joined to those who have washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb," now "clothed in white robes and palms in their hands."—
Rev. vii. 9.

Prayer.

"Also my prayer is pure."—JOB xvi. 17.

" THY WILL, NOT MINE."

**God of my life, my light, my love,
Oh ! teach me how to pray,
Give me the words I cannot find,
Give me the heart to say—
"Thy will, not mine."**

**Give me the faith I need to come,
That evermore would say,
Thy will, O Lord, in life be mine,
Lord, teach me that to pray—
"Thy will, not mine."**

Prayer.

“Pray without ceasing.”



WHEN a child craves a favour from his earthly parent, how does he seek it? Does he go to his room to attire himself in his best robes and array himself? Does he employ formal phrases, and long wordy periods to express the cravings of his heart? If this were so, few earthly parents would feel the same obligation to listen to their child. On the contrary, would he not in all probability turn a deaf ear, and question the need of the petition? But the same ear would at once be caught by the earnest, simple outcry that came from a helpless child, who in ragged garments and tangled hair, besought

him. So it is with our heavenly Father. His hand is outstretched to His cold, weary children, who in nakedness and rags "flee to the stronghold," and cry "Father!"

It is not the formal prayer, nor the many words, but the never-ceasing cry that moves the Eternal Ear to pity. Let us put aside the robes of worldliness, the tinsel, and the gew-gaws of self-approval and self-love, and like the guileless child, in sackcloth, and in dust of self-abhorrence cling to our Father's hand. He will lead us safely through the thickets, the valleys, the plains, until He bring us to the high mountain of His New Jerusalem—that jewelled city that "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive."

Praise.

"While I live will I praise the Lord; I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being."—PSALM cxlvi. 2.

THE VOICE.

A VOICE is whispering through the pines,
Secret to all but me;
Nought can ye hear but quivering leaves,
No words are sung to thee.

The hum and din of earthly strife
Ring louder on thine ear,
And drown the tender words that fall
On memory's sacred bier.

Long, long ago, that same sweet voice
Was heard upon a sea,
'T was borne on tempest through the storm,
O'er waves of Galilee.

That voice is whispering through the pines,
That same sweet voice to me;
And says "Lift up thy burdened heart,
Thy Saviour speaks to thee."

Take off the withered buds that lie
Faded on memory's bier,
And lay fresh lilies on the pall,
Nor one regretful tear.

And bind fresh roses on thy brow,
With myrtle interleaved;
And amaranth and immortelle
In chaplet interweaved.

And hear the voice that through the pines
Is speaking still to thee,
In whispers through the quivering leaves,—
"My peace I give to thee."

Praise.

"Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."—PSALM cxix. 54.



O we *praise* as well as *pray*? Do we follow the example of all nature, and find a voice in our hearts, and music in our souls, to *praise* God? Turn every page of nature's volume; mark the illustrations; follow the grass-written sod, and see how creation praises God. Even the stars once "sang together," and shall we, God's children, be the only exceptions?

Pilgrims and sojourners, do we sing as we go? Even the *Arab*, as he urges his camel onward over the drear wastes of the desert, sings as he walks, partly to dissipate

the long pilgrimage, partly to cheer his faithful beast. It is not only when we are beside the "still waters" in some green oasis, or under "a great rock in a weary land," that we should sing our songs, but in the wastes of sterner experience. 'Through tears we scatter our sorrows; relief comes from that fountain when unsealed. So song should be the voice, the expression of joy and gratitude from the heart. Sing on, life-traveller! sing as thou goest, and the angels will sing with thee this!

"Thy statutes shall be my song in the house of my pilgrimage."

Forgiveness.

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

LUKE xxiii. 34.

"'Twere better to suffer for well doing than for evil doing."

Be still, proud heart ! repinings hush ;
And count thyself but blest,
To suffer for well doing here,
Will bring eternal rest.

Put down the thorn, take up the rose,
Though crushed, its sweetness lives ;
Break the verbena from its stalk,
She still her fragrance gives.

Take up thy staff, hold firm thy shield,
Buckle thy sandals tight,
The way is long and steep, but mark !
There cometh rest and night.

Lie down beneath the palm tree's shade,
A branch cross on thy breast ;
Then fold thy shivering hands and pray
In well doing to be blest.

Forgiveness.

"Forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any ; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."—COL. iii. 13.



FORGIVING nature is not always a regenerate one ; not always a proof of inward sanctification. There is an indolent indifference of mind and character which holds little root, even of bitterness or joy. Such natures may have little to forgive, as they have little to feel or suffer. How beautifully the Saviour enforces the command, "Love your enemies;" those who have been cruel and evil. His Divine example should be ever before us, for even in His bitterest persecutions, during the agonies of the Cross, He prayed for those

who crucified Him: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Are we forgiving? Are we any of us so favored as to find nothing in our experience that requires our forgiveness? Happy such! It is always a consoling test of the power within us of forgiveness, if we apply the Saviour's *reason*, when he cried out in His last agonies, "*they know not what they do.*" So may we also apply this consolation which takes away half the bitterness of injury, "*they know not what they do.*"

A person who inflicts some great wrong upon another, knows not in one sense what he does; he perceives not the *wrong*; his perception and moral sense is so blind and dull, that he scarcely realizes the weight of that wrong which may be crushing innocence to the earth. -

Christ knew that point so well, the moral deadness and depravity of those who were his enemies.

From such "blindness of heart," we may well pray God to deliver us.

If we take this view of the loveliness of forgiveness, we shall not find it hard to forgive our bitterest foe. In truth we shall have no foe to forgive, for *pity* will usurp the place of anger and hatred, and we shall pray God, (if we have His light in our souls) that we may avoid the evil that has been inflicted upon us. Far better to be the wronged than the wronger; the forgiver than the forgiven. We have all great need of this Christian grace.

The long-suffering patience of God toward us, should make us merciful and forgiving, slow to anger and of great tenderness to each other.

Thus we shall grow symmetrical in our characters. Life is too short to bear malice or hatred in our hearts. Let us strive for meekness, gentleness, and long-suffering, remembering the sweetness and forgiving love of our Saviour and Redeemer.

Patience.

"Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him."

PSALM xxxvii. 7.

"Let patience have her perfect work."—JAMES I. 4.

"In patience possess ye your souls."

**Though the way be tortuous, narrow,
Steep the bend,
And the feet are sore and weary,
Will it end?**


**Though the heart is sad and weary,
On the way,
And God has seemed to hide his presence
Far away:**

**'T is to teach thee faith and meekness,
Courage lend.
Be thou faithful, strong, enduring,
Comes the end!**

Patience.

“If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.”

PROVERBS xxiv. 10.

HAT is that strength worth that only holds out during the day of prosperity? Thou hast no strength if it languishes when the road of life grows steep and difficult, and the eyes are too blind with weeping to see the way. It is for the “day of adversity” thy strength is given, that strength which is the fruit and flower of prayer and sanctification.

Seek it in earnest then, seek it in thine hours of prosperity and pleasure, if thou wouldst have it when the dark day of adversity comes. Then thou wilt not “faint,” but be strong; and find “as thy day, so will thy strength be.”

“ Oh ! thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.” Isaiah liv. 11.

Beautiful promise ! Not always shall we be defiled with the mud of our earthly walk, not always shod with these leaden sandals. If we are sincere and seek our comfort alone from Him, we shall find, if we look down to our feet, that over the mud of earth will be laid these “ stones ” from the pavement of the Eternal City. Fair colors,” “ foundations of sapphires,” will ravish the eye and draw it onward to that spiritual walk which leads to the “ Celestial city, and to the company of those “ who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.”

* * * * *

“ Casting aside every weight.” The Apostle’s language here refers to the Christian’s warfare, but let us contemplate the same text under another signification. Life travellers we all are, whether we be christian pilgrims or not. As travellers, we all have

our pack, our burden, to carry over the hills of life. Some of us not only bear our burdens, but our very feet seem shod with weights instead of wings. Still we may learn how to "run and not slip, to walk and not faint."

God sometimes in his infinite goodness takes off these leaden sandals. But mark—take heed ; is there no danger of losing our balance, or getting too light through the change? Let us look closer then to our footsteps, more carefully than ever, when the heavy weight is removed. Let us observe that "our feet be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," and that being lightened of our weight we advance more steadily, nor fall backward to the false lights and delusive vanities of worldliness, ambition, and spiritual death.

The Angel Guardian.

"Some have entertained angels unawares."—HEB. xiii. 2.

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us."—HEB. xii. 1.

THE PATH.

"Are they not all ministering spirits?"

THERE is a path whose radiant trail
Unwinds from worlds supreme;
And up and down, the noiseless feet
Pass as in Jacob's dream.

To some a golden street it seems,
To some a silver thread,
Alas! to most, a long dark bridge
Swung o'er a sea of dead.

To me, how dear that shining path,
Adown whose glittering way
I see the loved, the shadowy forms,
Of those who 've passed away.

Their shining garments, as they float,
Gild the dim earthly air
With radiance from their jewelled crowns,
With scent of palms they bear.

The Angel Guardian.

"The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."—PSALM xxxiv. 7.

DULL must be the spiritual eye, and darkened the sense, that does not perceive and feel "those ministering spirits," whom we are told are "sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation."

We are distinctly taught that we are "encompassed with this cloud of witnesses;" that we walk not *alone*; and are never unobserved.

The Apostle used this truth as an argument to incite his followers "to lay aside every weight, and the sin that did most easily beset them, that they might more

effectually run the race set before them." Do we enough realize this truth? If we did, we should be holier in our hearts, purer in our thoughts, truer in our judgments, sublimer in our lives. Blessed promise that we can cling to for support in our most perplexing hours. The "angel unawares" we should not drive away, but make it possible for him to encamp very near to us, to deliver and help us in our trials, and to minister unto us when we are beneath the tempting sunshine of prosperity and the smiles of God.

It is "not against flesh and blood we wrestle in this our spiritual warfare, but against principalities and powers, against the *rulers of darkness*," &c. So we perceive there are "rulers of darkness," evil agencies, wicked spirits. We need strength to pray against evil spirits also, that they may not be attracted to us, or find pleasure in our abode. In the still hours of the night, the angel of the Lord encampeth round about His people. Are we His

people? Let us be sure of it; then shall we "lie down in peace and sleep, for Thou Lord only, makest us to dwell in safety."

This "cloud of witnesses" is a solemn thought; for their appointed office is to bear evidence of us and our lives. The belief in angels' ministering was universally cherished in the primitive church; and not till the church had lost the spirit of "her first love" and simplicity, did she become lukewarm to this doctrine.

Do not our hearts sometimes burn within us, as did the disciples, when Jesus walked with them on the road to Emmaus? Or does the visible, perishing, dying world so fill our hearts, and blind our eyes, that we cannot discern the "cloud of witnesses that encompass us"—the ministering angels sent forth from God "to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Heavenly Mindedness.

"While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear."—1 PETER iii. 2.

"JESU MIO MISERICORDIA."

(An Aspiration.)

HOLY Jesu ! hear my prayer,
Floating on the midnight air,
Like sweet incense may it bear
My grateful adoration.

Gentle Jesu ! may Thy love,
Rest on me as holy dove,
O ! keep me pure in Thine own love,
Jesu my salvation.

Blessed Jesu ! may my life
Be lost in Thee, while in earth's strife ;
And deaden to the sins so rife,
That hinder my progression.

Lovely Jesu ! may each day,
Bring me nearer on my way,
To that endless perfect day,
Eternal consecration.

Precious Jesu ! may each night,
Illumined be, by Thine own light ;
Ope' mine eyes, refresh my sight,
With *perfect satisfaction*.*

* "I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness."

Heavenly Mindedness.

“Whose conversation is in Heaven.”



HOW rarely it is our experience to meet a person whom we can truly call *heavenly minded*. It is no uncommon thing to find people amiable, generous, lovely, but very few of whom we can really say they are heavenly minded:—minds that reach beyond the present; and “whose conversation is in heaven.” To live in this world as not abusing it, and to have one’s interests beyond the present visible scenes, is what the Apostle meant. . . . Having our conversation in heaven is not the forced artificial strain of fanatical zeal, which is “not according to knowledge;” not

G

74 HEAVENLY MINDEDNESS.

the transient enthusiasm of some period of peculiar impression ; but the habitual *taste* of the mind ; the love of heavenly things, and the true estimate placed upon all that must perish here, of sin, imperfection, death, in every form. To have one's conversation in heaven is to have one's *heart* there, one's *love* there, one's *treasure* there. To press lightly earth's sands, to feel that we are pilgrims, sojourners ; that this world is not our abiding place, but that we are really seeking one to come. Not the feverish chase after heaven, when some calamity overwhelms us ; nor the temporary impulse that drives the soul after God when all here is broken and dead. But having our conversation in heaven is having our affections truly set there ; preparing for the unseen and eternal, which we see and know through faith and the promises. Only they who are heavenly-minded, and who seek their conversation in heaven, are really happy. The world looks on, and sees very little, perhaps, in the outward lot of many of this

HEAVENLY MINDEDNESS. 75

class. Poverty, suffering, misery, may only be what is visible, while joy, gladness, peace, and contentment, abide surely with those whose "conversation is in heaven."

The Lilies.

"Consider the lilies how they grow."—LUKE xii. 27.

ALONE WITH JESUS.

ALONE with Thee! when evening shadows falling,
With misty mantle, wrap the purple hills;
Alone with Thee! when starry hosts arising,
Illume the night, which on the landscape thrills.
Alone with Thee!

Alone with Thee! when solemn night advancing,
Folds the drear shadows in her deathly wings,
Which stealing softly through the sleeping valleys,
Sweet rest and peace. to many a wanderer brings.
Alone with Thee!

Alone with Thee! in heavy hours of darkness,
In restless nights of sorrow, pain, or care,
Alone with Jesu in the soul's communion,
Alone with Jesu in the trance of prayer.
Alone with Thee!

The Lilies.

“Consider the lilies of the field.”



WHEN trouble or disappointment fastens its corroding tooth upon the “pleasant places” of the soul, when we realize the instability and worthlessness of these pleasures of time and life; it is then we reach after, and admire more than ever, the beauties of nature—the loveliness of God in all His works. It is when some great trial makes us feel how depraved this human nature is, that we long to break away from this body of death and enter our new life behind the vail. It is common enough to find people who profess sound doctrine, but few who *adorn* the doctrines they *do* profess. When

trouble comes they are driven to seek consolation in that religion they have hitherto held but theoretically, not practically ; and in their *dark days* they feel no warmth from the "Sun of Righteousness." But the child of God has his solace for the dark as well as for the bright days, and finds himself actually counting with joy the rain-drops of grief because they bring him nearer to his Saviour. The sun of unbroken prosperity beats too hotly on his head, and he finds himself seeking the shady side of life's road for the cool refreshment which trial improved offers him. He has more strength now the sun is hidden, and turns off from the crowded thoroughfare of life, down through the green seclusion of some bye-path that leads him away from the world's din and glare. He is with God now ; in the church of nature to find his solace, into the leafy cathedral of the woods to worship Him.

He stoops to consider the lilies "in their spotless garments," symbolical of

purity. He remembers Christ's words, that "even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." While he stops to admire and inhale their sweetness, he can almost see the lily fade; wonders why the flowers were made so beautiful, attractive, and yet so frail, short-lived, and so soon to be exhaled into the death around. The violets, the roses, have all spoken to him, but before their sweetness can be grasped, they are gone. The Christian has learnt from these teachers more than one lesson. He has *considered* the lilies. Not only have they taught him that the flower of the field perisheth and the grass fadeth; not only does he perceive the analogy between them and his own frail life, but he has found another gem of truth hidden in the calyx of the lily. His troubles, his heart-aches, his griefs are absorbed in the thought that his sufferings are as fleeting as the flowers. He feels more than ever the cogency of that reason which should lead him to perceive that the atmos-

phere of the *world* and sin, is a deadly, malarious climate. The lily even cannot live long in the insidious breath of the gentlest summer air; the atmosphere of earth. Thus the afflicted, suffering child of nature may take to heart the lesson not to plant the spiritual flowers of his heart's affections in the earth-mould of this life, for it is like planting flowers *in* the grave instead of *on* it. He learns that all who breathe only the life that now is, must die; and he must strive to reach after those heavenly lilies, of which earth's fairest are but the symbols.

Purity, peace, and contentment, will surely follow that morning's ramble in the dark aisles of the forest-church. All seasons are lovely there. Spring, with her violet maidens, waiting to deck the rich robes of the queen of summer. Autumn, the poet's season, dear pathetic autumn, the Lenten season of nature's church. Forest leaves now cover the bier of summer, and whisper to us of these fading frail seasons of life.

Frost spangles the ivy, and gems the grass—so typically telling of nature's death and night. Does God forget His works? Does the Great Poet overlook the least work of His hand? Oh! no. If He is so lavish of His gifts in His creation, He will certainly not forget us; for if He heareth even the ravens when they cry, will he not remember that we "are but dust?"

The Continuing City.

“ And the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.”—

Rev. xxi. 18.

“ For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”—Heb. xiii. 14.

THE MER DE GLACE.

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass."

Down from the dizzy pathless drifts
The frozen river flows,*
A sea of glass in glittering waves
Transfixed in death's repose,
Celestial blue from worlds unseen,
Mantle the icy crests,
And precious gems their shadows fling
Like flowers upon the wastes.

The Amethyst with regal light,
Like violet's sweet breath,
Are types of flowers,—spirit buds,
Frozen into death;
With onyx stem and jasper leaf,
And blush of agate rose,
How beautiful! Has sunset died
And into felspar froze?


The crystal typifies the spray,
Not lost on wayward breeze,
Not thrown in garlands on the land,
But into tear drops freeze.
They call all this the type of death,
Oh, rather call it life!
For nature dies not here, for this—
This is unchanging life!

This river runs not to the sea,
These flowers do not die,
The very air seems but transfixed
To one eternal sigh.

* Under the glaciers the torrents swell and flow unseen.

The Continuing City.

“ Pilgrims and sojourners as my fathers were.”

O-MORROW, to-morrow, to-morrow, is the cry ! The only exception to this universal yearning would seem to be the experience of the early christian martyrs, of whom Tertullian said : “ There is no *to-morrow* for a christian.”

In those days, when the lamp of christianity feebly flickered in the damp, mouldy, dripping chapels of the Roman catacombs, there was really no “to-morrow” for the martyrs ; at any moment they were exposed to sudden death. Not so with us ; yet how few there really are who live in the *deeds*, responsibilities, pleasures, or pains of to-

day." Hope rarely plants her silver anchor in the shifting sands of the twenty-four hours. She invariably reaches forward to plant it in to-morrow's unknown, but sure to be (she thinks) a more firm foundation, a less sandy soil. The invalid looks forward to to-morrow's sun, which is clouded to-day, and is cheered with the anticipation. The husbandman as he drops the seed into the furrows, goes his way whistling, looking for the coming to-morrow of harvest. The scholar studies more earnestly, and endeavours to pierce into greater truths, filling his mind with the fruits of his industry; yet he looks forward to a brighter to-morrow, when the memory unclouded by disease or feebleness, shall be the resurrection of the buried seeds of wisdom and research. The pleasure-seeker looks forward to a more propitious, a more successful bubble to blow to-morrow than he did to-day; and the Christian looks forward to that glorious to-morrow, when all tears shall be wiped away, and he shall awake satisfied,

because in his Saviour's likeness. All nature says "to-morrow;" birds, flowers, insects—it is their solemn chant, and *has* been, ever since primeval man, and that first week, when God pronounced our world to be "very good!"

Our Lord's humiliation, passion, cross, and death, pointed to a glorious *to-morrow*, when He should be the risen Lord. Every profession, worldly ambition, pursuit, are engaged in the universal cry, *to-morrow*; and yet "thou knowest not what the morrow may bring forth." Hope's anchor may be shattered, buried deep, for future "to-morrows." The traveller, by sea or land, holds not to the bright sky, or the propitious breeze, or the success of to-day, but counts on *to-morrow*, and the end of his journey. Here we have no abiding city; we are all seeking one to come; all looking forward to *to-morrow*; though our tents may be pitched in many a green spot, and beside the still waters of happiness and peace.

We all boast of more or less patriotism ; few of us are insensible to the natural love and claims of country. Our own laws, our own rulers, our own politics, our own national prejudices, we deem to be the best ; and we fight to the last drop of blood for country and for home. Life's interests, politics, and fashion, absorb us, and yet how short are these to-days, hastening as we are to our long to-morrow, that eternal day, that city "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." How well we are instructed in life's perplexing conflicts and politics ; but are we equally absorbed in those politics that appertain to the heavenly country ? Are we as jealous for the honor of our great King as we are for our country's sovereign ? Are we loyal citizens, as ready to take up our arms in defence of our Heavenly Prince and King ?

For at the gate of that city we must lay down all warfare, animosities, and feuds, break the sword, and take up the pruning hook. There will be no nationalism recog-

nised in heaven. The only passport that will be demanded at those gates will be, not aliens nor foreigners, simply "recognition."

Let us not put down the milestones in our journey, nor look back too much on the miles we have travelled, except as they, by experience, guide us for the future, and remember to-day is real, to-morrow is shadowy.

THE CITY THAT IS TO COME.

The traveller naturally is on the watch, as he approaches his journey's end, for the goal; the place to which he is destined. He forgets the weary stretch behind him, and only remembers the "City that is to come." So the Christian traveller eagerly seeks for the first glimpse of the heavenly city to which he is hastening; the end of his earthly way. He strains his mental

vision for every new glimpse of the towers and domes that loom upon the distant horizon of revelation. In that earnest gaze he forgets the weary miles, the rainy days, the sleepless nights, and even the smiles and pleasures of his past experience. His whole mind now is bent upon the end ; the city he loves. We cannot complain that no painter, nor poet, nor prophet, has ever given us a picture of that city ; only it is so magnificent that "eye-hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive (to their full extent) the things that God has prepared for them that love Him." Still we are not left wholly ignorant of the city that we seek ; it has been sung by poets, prophets, angels ; the shepherd king turned his harp to the one inspiring theme. Prophets died with the promise on their lips ; and lastly, as the first books of the Bible begin with the building of this world from the beginning, so does the inspired page of the revelation end with a glorious

description of the world that is to come, and of which this world is typical. But of all the descriptions that are given to us, none is more satisfactory to the cravings of the mind than the wonderful revelation of St. John, which we do well to read and study, if only to obtain the blessing that is promised to "him that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy."

If we reflect upon the prophecies of scripture, and realize how wonderfully they have come to pass, we shall not anchor our thoughts on vain delusions, or cast about in the muddy waters of speculation and scepticism ; but hold fast in faith believing. Let the single prophecy predicted against Jerusalem and her people suffice for our argument. We have seen Jerusalem trodden under foot and laid waste, all her pleasant places destroyed, and her people scattered all over the world, and literally "sifted" among the Gentiles. We must acknowledge this, for the stern overpowering finger of fact indicates it.

94 *THE CONTINUING CITY.*

Jerusalem's destruction was sublimely predicted in metaphor, even as the picture of the New Jerusalem is painted also for us in metaphor.

It is a new heaven and a new earth ; a holy city coming down from God, " prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." It is no mere picture, but a city whose light is like a " stone most precious " clear as crystal. There are walls, gates, and foundations, sculptured with the names of the twelve apostles, and these walls are jasper, and the streets are pure gold, and garnished by all manner of precious stones. There are gates of pearl and angels standing there as sentinels, (*not armed soldiers*) and the sublime description closes with the words, " the gates of it are not shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there. A " pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, flows through that city, and all that can ravish the eye and delight the soul, is prepared for the nations of them which are saved."

Earth with her fruits, flowers, rivers, plains ; her arts, sciences, all are typical of that enduring city which knows no ruin, no blight, no vicissitudes of time or change.

There, where all differences of color, of nation, of social degrees of rank, of riches, shall be merged into that simple test—
“Are you the redeemed people of God ;
loyal citizens of the great king?”

Planted in His Likeness.

“ I shall be satisfied when I awake, with Thy likeness.”—

Ps. xvii. 15.

“ Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him.”—ROMANS vi. 9.

EASTER DAY.

"Christ being risen from the dead dieth no more—Death hath no more dominion over Him."

No longer mourn we at the grave
Of Christ our risen Lord,
Put off the sack-cloth, weep no more,
Let no complaint be heard
On Easter Day.

Great day! the resurrection morn
Breaks through the Christless night
Lift up your hearts from out the gloom
The Lord has risen! Light
On Easter Day.

Aye, strange that e'en a flower should bloom
Or green grass live to wave,
Strange that a bird could joyous sing,
When Christ was in the grave,
'Ere Easter Day.


But hark! the choirs of the wood,
Welcome the holy morn,
Sweet flowers of the new-born spring,
Death's wintry shroud adorn
This Easter Day.

Bring violets, infant smiles of spring
For 'tis our Church's day.
"Christ is risen," rise with Him,
And praise as well as pray
On Easter Day.

O Jesu! Saviour of my soul,
Dear Saviour, I would lay
Love's sweetest flower on thy crown,
On this our Easter day.

Planted in His Likeness.

"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."

OW much Pagan philosophy still lingers about the Christian faith; and how common it is to contemplate death with morbid dread. Not so was it with the early christian; *he* looked forward even through martyrdom to the hour of death, and welcomed it. Night is associated with death, and darkness with the grave! But not so should the Christian regard that hour. The churchyard is but the field where the seeds of life and immortality are sown; "*sown*" observe, not *buried*. The body, subject to disease and corruption, must be sown once in the gardens of death. It is a great field; the

wheat and the tares are sown together, but they await the harvest, when the husbandman will divide them. To be "*planted in His likeness*" after life's weary journey is ended, should be a thought of sweet comfort. We wreath the flowers upon the coffins of the dead, the buds of yesterday we lay upon the sculptured dust of the infant,—all, all so deeply significant of an earthly frailty and the resurrection of the soul.

The body is then "sown in weakness, to be raised in power; sown the natural to be raised the spiritual body;"—the very thought is suggested by the flowers that teach us. But we are so worldly and so fond of blowing these bubbles of time, that we heed not as we walk, these heavenly lessons of nature from God's book, on which he has inscribed, and in which he has illustrated the whole history of our lives, and the promises of our resurrection. With a glorified body we are to rise from this earthly frame of dust. That will be *changed*, but not the soul

within; and how sad and miserable is the idea of an immortal body, enshrining an unglorified spirit! Let us strive more earnestly than ever after the symmetry, the loveliness of the soul-life within. It is worth every sacrifice, every effort, every renouncement, to model, chisel, and beautify this God-sculptured soul that is within us.

* * * * *

“GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS
GREAT GAIN.”

Dark days, but not *altogether* dark. Do the clouds still hide the sun? does the rain drip down the window pane, and the ivy startle and rustle with the wintry wind? Do we sit and repine, and long for the summer's sun to shine again? or do we long to live in *that* climate where the sun always shines? or, are we of those whom the Apostle commends as striving after that

“godliness with *contentment*, which is great gain?” Have we found that “*gain*?” Are we contented with our lot? Is the landscape of the soul unclouded, notwithstanding the ungenial atmosphere that may surround us? Or do we find a mournful epitome of ourselves in this outside world’s inclemency, and discover a picture of our own sullen discontented hearts within? Let us hope not; but take to ourselves those precious promises, which are so lavishly bestowed upon those whom God has chastened by *dark days*. No cloud can really hide His pavilion; no rain can beat against the inner temple of the really *living* soul. There can be no darkness nor night where His love irradiates and cheers. No tempest can swamp our bark of life, if we carry Christ our Redeemer as helmsman with us. There is no night in that soul where God has taken up His abode; no *dark days*! Let us be resolved in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be *content*; not that mis-called contentment, which is merely an

indolent indifference, or apathetic *ennui*, but that contentment which results from a peaceful conscience, from love to our God for His mercies ever remembered, and because He has sustained and delivered us through dark as well as sunny days. If our days are *dark*, let us remember Him who trode earth's darkest day for us. If our nights are dark, remember He was a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." It is through the darkness, the night of the grave, the spirit is received into glory. It is through the darkness and night of sorrow the spirit is awakened to resurrection and life. It is through the death of winter, all nature awakes to spring.

It is out of these dark days we should bring light, and joy, and peace; but only through Him can we find this *light*, this Easter morn of our gladness. Christ is risen to us then, and become indeed the "first-fruits of them that slept," the soul's Easter. So shall we bless God for all these dark days in which we learned to

love and lean upon Him, and if it be His will that, for our good and discipline, most of our earthly days be dark, still let us praise Him for the sun that *has* shone upon our pathway. Let us bless Him for the flowers that have far exceeded the nettles and the flint-stones. Nor repine because we see evil triumph over good, but remember *this* world is not *His*, but the other to which we are hastening. It is to that goal our hearts should reach, and for that end we should be almost willing to bless the dark days that led us to this light. It is curious to observe in one's life-experience how every one thinks his or her burden the hardest to carry over the hills of life. Life-travellers we are ; each one has his burden, whether his fellow pilgrim sees it or not ; but it is not every one that has learned to carry his burden with ease and grace. Most of us chafe and fret and keep changing it from one shoulder to the other, in the hope of relief.

But *he* is the successful life-pilgrim who

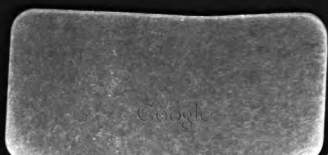
has learned how to balance his own burden, to adapt his gait to it, and can sing, too, as he journeys. Those who fancy their own trial is the heaviest to bear, and envy their neighbour who seems to have none, because they do not *see* it, ought to realize that he only is the triumphant life-traveller who has learned to walk upright and keep his burden out of sight, in the silences of his own heart; remembering there is One to help, one invisible hand, that eases the burden and carries it for him. For *such*, there will be no *dark days*.

WHEN days are dark, and nights are drear,
Forlorn and cold, no haven near,
Guide Thou my feet, make Thou my way,
And lead me into "perfect day."

Guide me, O guide me to that shore
Where sin and pain are known no more;
Where no *dark days*, and no more night,*
Shall hide His presence from our sight.

If days are dark, and nights are drear,
Forlorn and cold, no haven near,
Trust thou in God, be sure His way
Will lead thee into "perfect day."

* "For there shall be no *night* there."



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